



Presidents Message

Leonard Howard MD

Your HMA leadership just returned from the interim AMA meeting in Dallas, TX. Our representation consisted of our two Delegates, Dr Cal Kam and Dr Allan Kunimoto, your Alternate Delegates, Dr Fred Holschuh and your President, and your President-Elect Dr Patricia Chinn. Dr Holschuh and I also attended the Organized Medical Staff Section meeting immediately preceding the AMA meeting. The issue on everyone's mind was "Sunbeam-gate." Many resolutions centered on this issue, and several special meetings were held to explain the issue, the corrective actions taken, and the continuing investigation by a special committee of the House of Delegates.

Another item stimulating a great deal of discussion was the American Medical Accreditation Program, or AMAP. This is a physician certification program that is intended to make credential verification for various medical entities easier for the physician. Once the physician has been certified by AMAP, this will represent evidence that can be used in all cases where credential verification is required. Ideally, instead of having to repeatedly fill out one form for each organization, the AMAP accreditation form could be submitted. Unfortunately, the AMA staff presented the program to various states in a somewhat

heavy handed manner, giving the impression that no consideration would be given to states that already had a Credential Verification program in place. In addition there were some problems with communication between AMA staff and various state medical organizations. These problems were presented in several forums and the upshot was that the leaders of the AMAP program got the message from the grassroots, and the approach will be changed. We will be meeting with AMAP leaders in the spring to discuss how Hawaii might adapt the program to our specific needs.

The AMA Division of Representation has identified four priorities for 1997-98:

- Assisting local medical societies in opening a dialogue with health plans as outlined by the Department of Justice/Federal Trade Commission antitrust guidelines.
- Providing medical societies with action plans, including sample letters and contract provisions, to assist physicians in common complaints before health plans and help physicians and medical societies resolve these issues more effectively through various legal, media, and other strategies.
- Through local medical societies, assisting employed physicians seeking to collectively bargain with their employers, including, if requested, assisting in forming a recognized collective bargaining unit.
- Directly assisting individual physicians and group practices by providing consulting services and strategies to enhance physician/patient presentation before plans on issues of critical concern such as policies and practices that interfere with the patient physician relationship and inappropriate application of clinical guidelines.

While we were at the meeting, we met with three CEOs of different State Medical Associations to review our HMSA Participating Provider Agreement. We used the information gained in these meetings to assist us in our discussions with the HMSA. Our new Medical Economics/MCO Committee will be reviewing all the participating provider contracts covering our members, and we will also send these agreements to the AMA office for their review as well.

Each time a physician attends an AMA meeting for the first time, we seem to hear the same comments, i.e. "Now I understand why we need to be associated with the AMA." It was gratifying to hear the same comment from a new council member the other night. I would like to extend an invitation to any HMA member to attend Council meetings. We meet on the first Friday of every other month starting in December (except for February when the Council will meet on the second Friday due to my visit to the Hiroshima Prefecture Medical Society 50th Anniversary meeting) Simply call Angela at HMA and let us know you are coming, so we can add to the meal order. I look forward to seeing many of you at Council meetings this coming year.

ARE YOU PRACTICING MEDICINE THE WAY YOU WANT TO?

- Do you understand the new HMSA Participating Physician Agreement?
- Do you want to form a group practice to lower overhead and strengthen your payor bargaining power without relocating your practice or jeopardizing your income?
- Have you established a professional corporation to avoid personal liability?
- Is your group structured properly to avoid malpractice?
- Are your personal assets structured properly to protect against professional liability?
- Do you understand the process of an associate buy-in or merger?
- Are you prepared to competently negotiate with your employer or employee?
- Do you know how to sell or purchase a medical practice?



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